

Investigating Academic Writing Challenges of Bachelor of Science Students in Soran University

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Abstract

This study explores the challenges of academic writing proficiency among Bachelor of Science students at Soran University, focusing on those students who use English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Given the pivotal role of English in global academic communication and observed difficulties faced by non-English major students in Science Departments, this research aims to identify specific linguistic, pedagogical, and cultural factors undermining academic writing skills. Employing a phenomenological research design, the study investigates the lived experiences of students and lecturers to understand the nuances of academic writing challenges and propose some solutions. Through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, the research attempts to uncover a complex interplay of inadequate linguistic preparation, pedagogical shortcomings, and cultural influences contributing to students' writing difficulties. Results highlight the necessity for early integration of academic writing in curricula, personalized linguistic assistance, and institutional support through writing centers and specialized courses. Finally, recommendations include adopting more interactive and technologically enhanced instructional methodologies and personalized, discipline-specific language support. This study contributes to the discourse on EAP education, offering insights and practical guidelines for improving academic writing proficiency among non-native English speakers in higher education.

Keyword: Academic Writing, Non-English Department, EFL learners, Linguistic Challenges.

1. Introduction

Since English has received great attention worldwide as a global language and a language of instruction for obtaining knowledge and communication, it has become a widespread phenomenon in academic institutions. Considering such an understanding, English language has been introduced to the curriculum of all basic and higher education institutions in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region as a compulsory subject. At the university level, English is aimed not only at being learnt by students from English Language Departments but also by students in non-English departments, aiming to develop their language proficiency level, so that they can better communicate and get better access to the sources related to their specific fields, as much of the spoken and written information is in English. Besides, students of such departments must draft essays and reports related to their scientific fields every day through their study. Thus, they need to be proficient writers in English.

This study provides some contributions in promoting the writing skill of non-English major learners through identifying challenges they face. Regarding the faculty, the findings of this study can help with teaching and learning activities, particularly in English writing. Regarding the teachers at Soran University, it can help them in general, and the faculty of science and Engineering in particular, it attempts to tackle problems in teaching writing for academic purposes and create opportunities for writing learning more effectively and innovatively. As far as students are concerned, in Science Departments, they may find the current research useful in improving their writing skills and adding good insights to the learning experience. Also, the researcher's perception can be developed via the process of problem-solving, and the research can be a beneficial experience related to his knowledge of educational research and his future career as an instructor. This research acts as a motivator and provides information to other researchers to perform additional research to improve the quality of English teaching and learning, particularly in writing. Finally, this research can be utilized as a reference by the readers to solve problems related to writing in English.

Thus, this study is situated within the educational landscape of Soran University in Kurdistan Region of Iraq, specifically addressing the academic writing challenges confronted by Bachelor of Science students who utilize English for Academic Purposes (EAP). As a key component of the university curriculum, English proficiency for academic writing holds significant implications for these students' academic success and prospects. The context of this investigation extends beyond language proficiency to explore the broader pedagogical, cultural, and linguistic factors that contribute to the difficulties faced by non-native English speakers, particularly those with Kurdish as their first language. This research aims to shed light on the pedagogical approaches, resources, and institutional policies that currently shape the development of academic writing

skills in English at Soran University. By considering the perspectives of the students themselves and drawing comparisons with other educational contexts, this study seeks to offer valuable insights and recommendations to enhance the academic writing experiences of Soran University Bachelor of Science students and improve the effectiveness of EAP instruction within this unique academic setting.

Moreover, the current study first and for most attempts to aim at identifying and analyzing the specific linguistic and cultural factors contributing to the challenges in academic writing proficiency among EFL learners in science Departments at Soran University. Secondly, the study aims at comprehensively assessing the perspectives of both teachers and students within the Science Departments at Soran University regarding the existing difficulties in academic writing, with the goal of formulating targeted interventions and recommendations for enhancing writing skills. Additionally, the study targets the examination of the effectiveness of current English-medium educational strategies at Soran University's Faculty of Science and Engineering in preparing students for academic writing demands, and to propose evidence-based improvements that align with the evolving needs students in a globalized knowledge-based environment. Consequently, the study attempts to explore the correlation between academic writing proficiency and overall academic success among Bachelor of Science students at Soran University, emphasizing the significance of proficient writing skills in their academic pursuits and future careers. Furthermore, the study tends to establish a comprehensive framework of recommendations based on the study's findings, designed to bridge the identified gaps in academic writing proficiency among EFL learners in Science Departments, and to offer practical guidelines for curriculum development and pedagogical enhancements tailored to the unique needs of Soran University students.

Research Questions

In line with the objectives of the research, the current study aims at answering the following research questions:

- 1- What challenges do non-English major students at Science Departments face in academic writing?
- 2- What are the students' and lecturers' perceptions of potential causes of non-English major student's academic writing challenges?
- 3- What are intervention strategies that can be applied to promote non-English major students' academic writing skills?

2.Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies

This chapter covers the theoretical framework, concepts underpinning the current study, and a survey of the relevant literature in academic writing. All of which

are intended to help establish a foundation for our knowledge of the current study. The purpose of a theoretical framework is to give meaning to the data and offer a coherent explanation for individuals' actions or statements. Literature's role is to elevate research from being descriptive to explanatory. According to the theoretical framework that inspired this research, learning is viewed as a social activity strongly placed and impacted by the context in which individuals interact.

2.1 Theoretical Review

Academic writing, as a cornerstone of scholarly communication, plays a pivotal role in knowledge dissemination and intellectual growth across diverse academic disciplines. The ability to articulate ideas cogently, adhere to established conventions, and engage in rigorous analysis through the written word is not only essential for students navigating their educational journey but also for researchers and scholars contributing to the global discourse (Paltridge, 2004). As such, a comprehensive understanding of academic writing is crucial for prompting a critical assessment of the existing literature on this subject.

This review embarks on an exploration of the extensive body of literature devoted to academic writing, drawing upon an array of authoritative sources and scholarly insights. The endeavor is rooted in the recognition that academic writing is a multifaceted endeavor, influenced by pedagogical, linguistic, and disciplinary factors, all of which intersect to shape its practice and proficiency. By delving into this rich repository of academic thought, the study seeks to elucidate the evolving landscape of academic writing, identify its recurring themes and challenges, and discern the emerging trends that influence contemporary discourse.

2.2 Academic Writing Proficiency

As novice college students, many individuals may experience heightened levels of anxiousness and possess numerous inquiries regarding the nature of academic writing within the college context. The term "Academic" may elicit a negative reaction or disdain from someone. Due to the significant role of writing as a means of communication, it is imperative for students to prioritize its development and strive to acquire a multitude of academic competencies in conjunction with their writing proficiency. However, the act of writing can be challenging, particularly when it comes to academic writing in college, which sometimes requires adhering to a set of unfamiliar guidelines and conventions (Irvin, 2010).

According to (Defazio et al, 2010), the ability to write well is a cognitive skill. The process entails the acquisition, understanding, use, and integration of novel information. From the standpoint of a faculty member, the act of writing effectively encompasses more than simply conforming to established writing

rules. The act of writing involves not only the creative process of generating ideas and inspiration, but also the cognitive tasks of problem-solving, critical reflection, and the iterative process of revising and editing, leading to the production of a finished manuscript. From the standpoint of a student, the act of writing can be perceived as a burdensome and potentially unpleasant task, involving the challenging endeavor of expressing one's thoughts on paper while simultaneously striving to attain proficiency in other aspects of writing, such as spelling, citation formatting, and grammar. According to (Trioia, 2003), the challenges faced by students in achieving effective writing can be partially attributed to their struggles in executing and managing the procedures involved in proficient creating, planning, and revising their work. The reflective process is a crucial component in attaining writing excellence, encompassing the capacity to evaluate one's own work and that of one's peers. According to McGuire et al., (2009), the inclusion of reflective writing in professional programmers' curriculum is significant as it serves to educate problem-solving skills.

The act of writing encompasses various dimensions, functioning as a vehicle for expressing and communicating one's ideas and viewpoints. The importance of possessing adept English writing abilities has assumed great significance in the contemporary interconnected global environment. This proficiency facilitates effective communication among individuals of diverse backgrounds, enabling them to engage in various forms of written correspondence, including letters, emails, business reports, web content, and other mediums (Botia et al, 2016). Multiple scholars have put forth divergent perspectives regarding the nature of writing. Writing can be understood as a cognitive activity. The process requires intentional cognitive effort, frequently extending over a prolonged period of time (El-salahat, 2014). Academic writing necessitates the presence of a well-defined organizational framework. The structural composition of a written work is frequently influenced by its genre. As an illustration, a formal report often comprises an introductory part that outlines the objective(s) of the study, a methodology section detailing the research approach employed, a discussion section for analyzing and interpreting the findings, and other relevant sections. Conversely, an academic essay consists of an introductory section that includes a thesis statement, well-defined body paragraphs with subject sentences to support the thesis, and a concluding section to summarize the main points presented. The composition needs to exhibit coherence, characterized by a consistent and rational flow of ideas, while also demonstrating cohesion, whereby the many components of the composition are effectively linked together. Thorough pre-writing preparation is essential to ensure that the outcome will have a well-organized framework, a distinct emphasis, and a coherent sequence of thoughts (Alexander et al., 2008).

2.3 The Teaching of Academic Writing

Academic writing is indefinitely a challenging task for university students, and it is not easy for them to adapt to the life of academia easily and spontaneously within the university. The transition periods between university and school level are particularly more strenuous than other periods. At such times, students normally find themselves in a demanding situation where they need to master various skills including writing, which might make it harder for them to adapt to academic writing (Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova, 2014). Moreover, there is no doubt that all the four skills of English are difficult to master for the students, but writing specifically tends to be more challenging for many students than the other skills (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Given that, it is not easy for one to adapt academic writing skills immediately since it carries with it a vast range of thoughts, reading efforts, and critical thinking. That in fact also includes lots of frustration as there are various times when a piece of writing that was painstakingly hard to write down comes to nothing but just a waste of time and effort (Langan, 2001). Considering the reasons above, academic writing can be taught with respect to three major elements such as; ideas, transformation, and topics. This means that the writers need to first gather their ideas effectively, and then must transform these ideas into well-formed and meaningful topics that can make sense to the reader (Lyons, 1990). Thus, writing is not easy to accomplish, and for one to be able to write effectively, one must master the many skills related to grammar, vocabulary, and text-formation. Thus, teachers face a challenging task in helping children develop these critical abilities necessary to become great writers.

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2.4 Challenges of Academic Writing

Writing is a form of social technology specifically developed to facilitate communication between individuals. The act of writing is influenced by social circumstances, as it is both acquired and generated within such contexts. Moreover, writing serves to form social connections, modify the writer's social identity, foster the development of shared interpretations, and facilitate social engagement. Writing is influenced by and plays a role in the social context in which it emerges, reflecting the features of the cultures it engages with and the historical legacies it perpetuates. The arduous process of acquiring the skills and knowledge related to writing, including the mastery of material and symbolic technologies, is driven by the societal significance attributed to writing. This recognition of the social worth of writing serves as a strong motivator, compelling individuals to engage in the demanding cognitive and psychological exertion required for effective written communication (Bazerman, 2015).

One challenging aspect of academic writing is that it involves many different communicative thoughts, feelings, and ideas for personal reflection or to share with others (Walshe, 1982). It includes a wide range of cognitive activities such as thinking, feeling, speaking, reading, and composing (Turbill, 1984). Converting concepts into written form necessitates substantial work to ensure reader understanding. The need to transmit ideas serves as a driving force for a writer, especially during times of monotony. When the information is personally meaningful to the writer or corresponds with their interests, such as knowledge they want to retain or share, it preserves their motivation. This drive may arise from a desire to document or impart information to others, or it may stem from genuine interest in a topic, encouraging investigation and reporting (Calkins, 1994).

2.5 The Context of the Study

The context of the current study includes students at Soran University who not belonging to English Departments but still study English as a compulsory subject and it is thought that they struggle greatly and may encounter a large number of challenges as a result of that. The aim is to understand such challenges that they face in regards to academic writing, find the reasons behind these challenges and come up with sufficient solutions. As stated earlier, academic writing can be defined numerously and it is agreed that writing is a skill that has to be obtained over a great amount of effort and hard work. Hence, the promotion of academic writing skills specifically for the students studying at non-English Departments is more of a greater challenge. Given the context of Soran University, little or no attention is given to the challenges and ways to promote academic writing skills for those whose major is not English. Apparently, such context plays a negative role in promoting academic writing skills. Thus, this theoretical framework looks into a literature previously observed in the field of academic writing and seeks ways to provide suggestions for the academic writing promotion for the students at Science Departments.

2.6 Previous Studies

The current research has three key areas. First, the study examines the obstacles EFL learners encounter when drafting academic papers. Careful investigation of these issues might reveal the unique hurdles students faced in this setting. A subsequent investigation examines the root causes of these issues. Understanding fundamental variables is essential for creating effective solutions. In conclusion, this study examines various methods for improving EFL students' academic writing skills. By analyzing these tactics, we hope to find the best methods and unique approaches that have helped EFL students develop superior academic writing skills. This comprehensive review intends to add to the body of

information on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' academic writing challenges and techniques for improving their writing.

To start with, a study was conducted by Seensangworn (2017) having two goals. First, the study examined Thai university students' writing challenges, particularly in process based EFL writing instruction. Second, the study examined these pupils' writing methods. The study included 80 second-year Thai undergraduates at Burapha University, both English and non-English majors. The study found that by recognizing EFL students' obstacles and providing effective solutions, instructors may improve English students' writing skills.

Moreover, Khadijah (2020) conducted a study to assess the academic writing abilities of fifth-semester English students and identify their specific challenges at Universities of Muhammadiyah Makassar in the 2019 academic year. The study used descriptive quantitative methods and academic writing assessments and questionnaires to assess students' writing issues. The study included 32 fifth-semester students purposively sampled from 220 students. With a mean score of 81.02, students showed competent writing. Plagiarism, grammatical problems, lexical issues, and lack of planning were the most commonly found faults, accounting for 23%, 25%, 25%, and 27%. These results showed the variety of academic writing issues students face, emphasizing the necessity for customized interventions and support to improve their writing skills.

Wischgoll (2017)'s "Fostering Academic Writing Skills and Text Quality Through Metacognitive Activities" sought to help beginner academic writers understand academic writing. The study examined how cognitive and metacognitive writing activities can increase writing skills and text quality, based on limited research on higher education writing activities and high school suggestions. The research had two studies. The first study assessed students' cognitive (text structure application and summary procedures) and metacognitive (self-monitoring strategy) writing training. The second study examined how training a cognitive writing method (text structure application) and providing feedback affected undergraduates and postgraduates. The results showed that metacognitive practices, particularly self-monitoring, increased undergraduate academic writing skills and text quality. This study stressed the need for metacognitive help with cognitive methods for academic writing skills and text quality.

It is interesting that these studies investigated the academic writing skills and the ways that academic writing skills were taught across different places and levels. The most important thing in regards to the current study is that it investigates the why and how questions. This means that the current research largely intends to underscore the major challenges that non-English major students face and seeks to find out the ways that such skills might be promoted. This is vital because these students have numerous assignments that all need to be conducted in English yet

they do not seem to pose the skills that academic writing requires. Therefore, the results of the current study are vital to the promoting of the academic writing skills for the students at Science Departments at Soran University.

3. Methodology

3.1 Design

In qualitative research, an approach emphasizes the exploration of people's experiences, behaviors, and opinions (Creswell, 1998), the research design is crucial. For this study, the phenomenological approach was adopted, focusing on the lived experiences of individuals as they described the phenomenon. The data analysis techniques employed are in line with the principles of qualitative research, emphasizing on 'how' and 'why' questions. However, it's essential to provide more detail on the specific methodologies and analysis techniques used in this research.

3.2 Sampling

Two focus groups were selected from students who had completed their first year in the Faculty of Engineering Departments, specifically in Civil Engineering, Petroleum Engineering, and Chemical Engineering. One group comprised five participants, while the other consisted of four participants, totaling nine individuals (6 male, 3 female). The distribution was as follows: 6 students from Civil Engineering, 2 students from Petroleum Engineering, and 1 student from Chemical Engineering. Additionally, one focus group was formed with participants from the faculty of Science/Biology Department, consisting of six fourth-stage students (3 male, 3 female). The study also involved five lecturers who taught first-year students in non-English departments, including Engineering and Science Faculties.

3.3 Tools

In this section, the data for the study were gathered through a combination of three focus group interviews conducted with students and five semi-structured face-to-face interviews held with lecturers individually. These interviews took place after the conclusion of the 2022-2023 academic year. To ensure a more systematic presentation of the data collection tools employed in this study, each instrument will be discussed separately in subsequent sections. This approach aims to provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of the nature and purpose of each tool.

The first data gathering instrument utilized in this research involves three focus group interviews conducted with students. These discussions aimed to delve into the challenges faced by non-English major students in Science Departments. Two separate focus groups were formed: the first comprised students from

Engineering Departments (Civil Engineering, Petroleum Engineering, and Chemical Engineering), with a total of nine participants (6 male, 3 female); the second group included students from the Science/Biology Department, consisting of six participants (3 male, 3 female) in their fourth stage.

The second data collection tool involved five semi-structured face-to-face interviews with lecturers who taught first-year students in non-English departments, including both engineering and science faculties. These interviews aimed to gain insights into the academic writing challenges from the perspective of the educators. In adherence to qualitative research principles, the phenomenological approach guided the focus group interviews, emphasizing the lived experiences of individuals in describing the phenomenon. The semi-structured face-to-face interviews with lecturers sought to provide a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by students, exploring the 'how' and 'why' questions.

3.4 Validity

The semi-structured face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions were guided by carefully crafted subject guides. The selection and formulation of interview questions were influenced by a thorough review of relevant literature and consultation with experts in the field. Although the interview questions were not explicitly mentioned as validated, it's important to assure the reader that the questions were designed to capture comprehensive insights into the challenges faced by non-English major students in Science Departments at Soran University.

3.5 Procedure

The meticulous process of data collection for this study was centered on the faculties of Science and Engineering at Soran University. Recognizing the exploratory nature of our qualitative research and the need for a profound understanding of complex situations, we opted for thematic analysis as our primary method. Thematic analysis, as championed by Pacho (2015), proves to be an invaluable approach in qualitative research due to its empirical, inductive, and interpretive nature within a specific context. Our research journey involved a systematic exploration of themes and patterns embedded in the collected data. By examining specific instances, we aimed not only to unravel the nuances of individual experiences but also to derive broader principles and norms, thereby contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Aligned with the tenets of qualitative research techniques, as elucidated by Lindlof & Taylor (2011), our approach was meticulously attuned to the social construction of meaning. This entailed a focused effort on the interpretation and analysis of participants' verbal expressions and actions throughout the study. By eschewing extensive measurement or verbal analysis, our chosen method allowed us to delve

deeply into the participants' perspectives, revealing rich insights that might otherwise be overlooked.

Furthermore, our data collection procedures included semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Semi-structured interviews facilitated open-ended conversations, allowing participants to express their thoughts freely, while focus group discussion provided supplementary layers of context to enrich our thematic analysis. Thus, the robust data collection procedures adopted in this study, anchored in thematic analysis and supported by diverse qualitative techniques, were designed to unearth the multifaceted challenges faced by non-English major students in Science and Engineering departments at Soran University. These procedures ensured a comprehensive exploration of their academic writing experiences, shedding light on the intricacies of their challenges and providing a foundation for subsequent analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis techniques employed in this study were meticulously aligned with the fundamental principles of qualitative research, with a paramount focus on unraveling the intricate nuances behind the 'how' and 'why' questions that underpin the phenomena under investigation. Nevertheless, it is imperative to delve deeper and furnish a comprehensive elucidation of the specific methodologies and analytical approaches meticulously harnessed throughout the course of research endeavors. By doing so, not only can the integrity and rigor of the research process be underscored, but it also facilitates a more nuanced understanding of the intricate dynamics at play within the studied context, thereby enriching the scholarly discourse and fostering avenues for further exploration and refinement within the realm of qualitative inquiry.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ensuring the ethical integrity of this research endeavor was paramount in every stage of the methodology. To safeguard participant confidentiality, the names of individuals were not disclosed in the research content. Instead, each participant's speech was anonymized through a code generated from the number of the focus group and their order within the group. This coding system aimed to protect the identity of participants while facilitating the organization of qualitative data.

Before interviews began, a crucial ethical step was taken through the signing of a consent form by each participant. This form clearly outlined the purpose of the study, emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation. The interviewers took the initiative to read the study's objectives aloud, explicitly explaining the rights of both participants and researchers. Participants were assured of their autonomy, with the right to withdraw from the interview or decline to answer any questions that they found uncomfortable or intrusive.

Moreover, participants were informed of their right to access the interview transcript before publication. This transparency was introduced to empower participants to review the content, ensuring accuracy and addressing any potential factual errors or misinterpretations. The acknowledgement of voice recording, and subsequent transcription was made explicit to participants, fostering transparency and informed consent.

4. Data Analysis

This section is devoted to showcasing the study's data collected from participants who actively took part in the research. The data is organized into distinct sections, each centered around specific themes, facilitating a seamless transition from one case to the next. The presentation involves a thematic explanation and analysis of the data, ensuring alignment with the overarching objectives of the study.

4.1 Academic Writing Challenges (Difficulties Identified by Lectures and Students)

Proficiency in academic writing is a crucial skill that is individually applicable to achieving academic success. However, individuals who have an elevated level of proficiency in English as a second language often encounter difficulties when creating various sections of academic papers at the graduate level. This problem is particularly apparent among overseas graduate students whose English is not their first language, especially in educational settings where English is the main medium of instruction (Singh & Kaur, 2017). Students have challenges while trying to express their ideas clearly through writing communication. In the context of the university of Soran, students from non-English Departments struggle with many challenges that are addressed below. Identifying these challenges is essential in promoting the academic writing skills of the students, which is the major goal of the current study.

4.1.1 Linguistic Challenges

This theme encompasses a wide range of fundamental issues that students often face with language, issues that are pivotal to their academic success. These challenges go beyond basic grammatical rules and extend to the effective and appropriate application of language within academic contexts. This theme critically highlights a systemic shortfall in foundational language education, emphasizing the importance of a robust understanding of English language mechanics and their application in diverse academic settings.

This is evident in FGI1P1's Quote: "I was having many difficulties in punctuation in coherent and cohesion in meaning, the choice of good topic, concluding the main ideas of the topic..." The quote vividly illustrates a significant struggle with essential writing skills. The student's difficulty with punctuation, coherence, and

topic selection is emblematic of a broader issue where basic elements of writing are not firmly grasped. Furthermore, the mention of struggling with cohesion and concluding main ideas further signals a gap in critical thinking and the ability to synthesize information, which are key components of effective writing.

Four lecturers from Soran University collectively emphasize the linguistic challenges faced by students in academic writing, each focusing on various aspects of these difficulties. Lecturer 1 points out the foundational language issues, such as mispronunciation and sentence structure problems, and the lack of familiarity with basic linguistic elements like conjunctions and punctuation: “They mispronounce the sounds of those letters... they mix sentences and write down sentences in a way... they are not familiar with those techniques, for example, conjunctions, like linking words... they have very, very problems with exclamation marks.” This highlights a deep-seated issue in students’ language education, underscoring the need for foundational language training. Lecturer 2 expands on this, detailing the struggles students face in constructing sentences, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and organizing their thoughts into coherent paragraphs and essays: “writing in difficulties with sentence, then difficulties with word orders, then difficulties with choosing the vocabularies, then difficulties in how to organize sentence within a paragraph and then paragraph within an essay.”

4.1.2 Educational Background and Preparation

This theme investigates the influence of the educational contexts of university students on their level of readiness for scholarly writing. It underscores a significant deficiency in pre-university education, wherein the emphasis is frequently not placed on academic writing. Failure to prioritize the cultivation of writing abilities and skills during the initial stages of education leads the students entering higher education to be devoid of the fundamental resources and capabilities required to proficiently manage academic writing assignments. The statement by FGI1P5, “I have never practiced [academic writing] even remotely, which is not ideal,” serves to underscore the educational deficiency even more. An evident deficiency in practical application of academic writing is evident, in addition to a lack of theoretical comprehension. These observations underline the critical nature of reassessing and enhancing the educational system to guarantee that pupils are adequately equipped with the skills necessary to succeed in scholarly writing, thereby preparing them for advanced studies and future professional endeavors. The four lecturers from Soran University provide a cohesive perspective on the theme of “Educational Background and Preparation,” particularly in relation to academic writing. Lecturer 1 addresses the root of the issue by pointing out the deficiencies in students’ native language skills: “Even sometimes they have problems with their Kurdish writing, believe me, they can

not write very well, even their handwriting is messy. Their language is full of grammatical mistakes.” This indicates a deeper problem in foundational language and literacy education, suggesting that the challenges with English academic writing stem from a more general lack of writing skills. Lecture 2 and lecture 3 echo a similar concern but focus specifically on the disconnect between pre-university English education and university-level writing demands. Both lecturers note that despite prior English studies, students seem ill-prepared for academic writing: “they have been studying English before, but when they start the collage study, it i’s like they haven’t studied anything about writing,” and “it’s like they haven’t studied anything about writing.” This highlights a significant gap in preparing students for the specific requirements of academic writing at the university level.

4.1.3 Interdisciplinary Challenges

The concept of interdisciplinary issues related to language teaching sheds light on a critical issue for learners. It focuses on the problems students have when attempting to apply their English language skills to their major topics or areas of specialization. This topic exposes significant disparities in teaching techniques and material across academic fields, emphasizing the need for a more integrated approach to education. It advocates for matching language training to the distinctive linguistic demands of various fields of study.

FGI1P3’s comment, “I think my level is not good, I need much training so that I can learn it to the most possible level,” demonstrates a profound lack of confidence in the student’s ability to effectively use language in the context of their chosen area. This admission highlights the important need for language training that is specifically adapted to the linguistic requirement of various academic specialties. It is critical to guarantee that students have the linguistic tools and abilities they need to succeed in their chosen fields of study, bridging the gap between general language proficiency and subject-specific language competency.

Furthermore, FGI1P4’s comment, “English course contents are not relevant to my major,” highlights the gap between English language education and the unique needs of students’ majors or fields of study. This discrepancy highlights the critical need for curricular changes that closely align language education with the various academic areas that students are studying. Such alignment would not only make language study more relevant, but also more effective since students would learn the language skills and terminology required for success in their respective areas.

4.2 Factors behind the Academic Writing Challenges for the Students

In exploring the challenges students encounter in academic writing, the current study has revealed a compelling array of factors that contribute to these difficulties. In this regard, the researcher investigates the insights gathered directly from students and learners who actively participated in the research. Through the valuable perspectives and experiences of the participants, three major themes have emerged, each shedding light on distinct dimensions of these challenges. These themes, namely “Student’s Cognitive and Psychological Factors,” “Unpreparedness for University Level Writing,” and “Learning and Teaching Practices” collectively provide a highly comprehensive framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of academic writing obstacles that students grapple with in their educational journey.

4.2.1 Student’s Cognitive and Psychological Factors

This theme looks at the cognitive and psychological aspects that influence pupils’ ability to write successfully. It includes more than just language competency; it also addresses the mental and emotional processes involved in writing, such as idea generation, critical thinking, and the ability to explain thoughts. Motivation, anxiety, and self-perception are all important psychological aspects that influence a student's writing process and outcomes.

FGI1P4’s Quote: “Due to my low level of speaking skill...the more words you know the more ability you have to write and also impress the audience.” The student connects the breadth of vocabulary and speaking skills to writing competency. This connection emphasizes the interdependence of diverse language abilities and the importance of a comprehensive approach to language education that fosters all parts of communication, rather than just writing in isolation. Furthermore, FGI2P1 refers to the stress students face when they aim at transferring their ideas from thoughts, they must write language: “The most cognitive challenge I have is that I can’t recognize my ideas and transfer them onto the paper.” This quote reflects a common cognitive barrier in academic writing – the difficulty of translating complex ideas into coherent written form. It highlights the need for cognitive skills like organizing and structuring thoughts effectively.

In addressing the theme of “Student’s Cognitive and Psychological Factors,” the four lecturers from Soran University shed light on various cognitive challenges faced by students in academic writing. Lecturer 3 identifies a specific issue in the organization of ideas, where students struggle to maintain coherence: “every paragraph should contain only one idea...They have this difficulty again, also.” This reflects a cognitive challenge in structuring thoughts logically in writing. Similarly, Lecturer 4 discusses the problem students face instating a piece of writing and structuring their ideas: “They don’t know how to start, like the idea, the process, for example, this is the introduction how to write an introduction,

they don't know how to define the topic first of all, they don't know how to start with a broad sentence and then narrow down." These observations suggest a broader issue in cognitive development, where students do not just struggle with language proficiency but also with the conceptualization and organization of their thoughts. Collectively, these insights point to a need for strengthening foundational language skills and teaching students how to effectively brainstorm, organize, and structure their ideas to overcome these cognitive and psychological barriers in academic writing.

4.2.2 Unpreparedness for University-Level Writing

The theme highlights a widespread problem in higher education: students entering college or university frequently lack the writing abilities required for success. This criticism points to a systematic issue in our educational system: the development of academic writing abilities is not highlighted or taught throughout schooling's initial stages. One of the most important challenges is the lack of core writing abilities, which presents a tremendous challenge for the students when they begin their academic experience.

This issue is encapsulated in a striking comment from FGI1P1: "I am not good at academic writing, as I do not have academic writing experience, and no courses in school, no courses at Soran University." This open statement serves as a sharp reminder of the prevalent problem in which academic writing is not given the attention it deserves in the education institutions. The student's lack of experience and formal instruction in academic writing indicates a huge overlook in educational curriculum, implying a pressing need for a fundamental transformation in how writing abilities are developed throughout the educational system. Furthermore, FGI1P5's statement: "I am really not interested in (writing) because I haven't been taught to write and care about it." This statement underlines the lack of writing instruction while simultaneously addressing the motivational factor. A lack of interest in writing is sometimes caused by lack of exposure and sufficient education.

4.2.3 Learning and Teaching Practices

This theme investigates the efficacy of contemporary teaching methods and the relevance of curricular content at the university level. It considers how well educational processes meet the demands of students particularly in terms of improving academic writing skills. Key problems include aligning English language instruction with students' primary disciplines and ensuring adequate class sizes for successful learning. FGI1P2's comment, "Three groups of students attend class in one hall", offers a vivid picture of a difficult learning environment marked by congestion. This overpopulation not only creates logistical issues, but also impedes the supply of individualized attention and interaction, both of which

are essential for learning complex abilities such as writing. The student's comment stresses the critical need for more intimate and dynamic learning settings capable of meeting the demands of individual students. This emphasizes the importance and necessity of smaller class numbers for meaningful student-teacher interactions, particularly in subject areas that require skill development, such as academic writing.

In discussing "Learning and Teaching Practices," the four lecturers from Soran University present varied perspectives on the challenges and solutions within the educational framework. Lecturer 3 adds a dimension by pointing out the avoidance of teaching writing skills at the university level due to the effort and time required: "most of the time teachers at university level want to go with short quizzes, they want to, and most of the teachers avoid teaching writing, teaching essay writing, teaching paragraph writing, teaching all these writing skills are avoided by most of the teachers because it needs more effort, it needs time to go through." This perspective complements Lecturer 4's view, which links the development of writing skills to reading practices: "The problem starts with reading, as you know, like reading and writing are inextricably intertwined. And without the presence of one you lose the value of the other." While Lecturer 3 focuses on the teaching approach, Lecturer 4 emphasizes the fundamental relationship between reading and writing. Collectively, these insights paint a picture of a multifaceted educational challenge where the development of writing skills is hindered by inadequate teaching practices, a lack of emphasis on the writing process, and insufficient integration of reading and practices, a lack of emphasis on the writing process, and insufficient integration of reading and writing as interrelated skills.

4.3 Strategies suggested by participants (Lecturers/ Students) to solve the academic writing issues of the students

Within this segment, the researcher examines the invaluable perspectives obtained firsthand from instructors and students who actively engaged in our investigation. The interrelated themes that have surfaced from the gathered data. The initial theme, titled "Suggestions for Improvement," encompasses a variety of approaches and suggestions proposed by the respondents to improve the academic writing abilities of students. The second theme, "The significance of Technology and Self-Directed Lecturing in Confronting Obstacles in Academic Writing," delves into the implications of these concepts. By combining these themes, one can obtain a comprehensive framework that facilitates comprehension of the diverse strategies and approaches advocated by stakeholders to address the intricacies linked to the academic writing abilities of students.

4.3.1 Suggestions for Improvement

This theme includes tactics and proposals proposed by students to improve academic writing skills. It includes recommendations for curricular revisions and the implementation of specialized courses or preparation programs. These suggestions reflect students' shared desire for a more structured and comprehensive approach to writing training, which addresses current gaps in educational practices and allows students to present their strategies and recommendations for improving their academic writing skills.

The views of participants FGI3P1, FGI3P4, and FGIEP5, though distinct in their focus, collectively underscore the multifaceted approach needed for effective language education. FGI3P1 emphasizes early engagement with language, stating, "As an individual, I believe that the best solution is practice, practice more and this has to be prior to university." This highlights the importance of building a strong language foundation from an early age, suggesting that language skills are best developed through long-term, consistent practice before higher education. In contrast, FGI3P4 offers a structural solution for university-level education, recommending, "Now we are at university, I suggest the first year to be completely dedicated to language as a foundation year." This approach addresses the immediate needs of university students, proposing a dedicated period for language acquisition to contract unpreparedness for academic writing.

The four lecturers from Soran University offer diverse yet complementary insights into improving academic writing skills, each emphasizing various aspects while sharing a common goal of educational reform. Lecturer 2's suggestion to "review and change the curriculum and textbooks" indicates a need for updating teaching materials to better suit students' needs, aligning with Lecturer 3's recommendation for a partial, department-specific workshops: "a workshop simply which costs less than a conference, a workshop for non-departmental studies can solve the problem." These ideas complement Lecturer 1's systematic approach by offering specific, actionable strategies. Lecturer 4, advocating "a bottom-up reform," emphasizes the early and fundamental reforms in writing education, asserting that "Students must be prepared for that task, as it is especially important." This perspective unites with the others, suggesting a comprehensive reform that spans from the foundational stages of education to higher academic levels, integrating policy changes, curriculum updates, and specialized training to collectively enhance academic writing skills.

5. Results and Discussions

The current study examined the academic writing difficulties encountered by Bachelor of Science students at Soran University, with a specific focus on those who utilize English for Academic Purposes (EAP). A complex network of linguistic, institutional, and educational obstacles was uncovered throughout the

study. The obstacles have a substantial impact on the academic writing ability of students, reflecting and expanding upon the issues that have been emphasized in prior scholarly works, including those by (Meltem, 2007), (Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova, 2014), Leki (1998), and Swales (1990). This alignment emphasizes the complex and diverse characteristics of academic writing difficulties while enhancing our complete understanding of the challenges students face when trying to write in higher education.

The linguistic barriers recognized by the participants, which include challenges related to vocabulary, grammar, and the development of coherent texts, are consistent with prior research that underscores the difficulties encountered by individuals who are not native English speakers. The results of this research emphasize the importance of providing specific linguistic assistance; they indicate that difficulties with punctuation, coherence, and tense usage are indicative of more extensive systemic problems in language learning. The participants' reflections on these challenges underscore the critical necessity for incorporating language development programs that are tailored to academic setting.

The demand for specialized writing courses, proficient instructors, and reduced class sizes serves as unequivocal evidence of the critical importance of institutional support in attaining academic writing success. The following is a restatement of the findings presented by Johns (1997) concerning the importance of institutional dedication in language assistance programs. The proposition to establish writing centers is consistent with the latest research on (EAP), which supports the notion of delivering personalizing assistance to students. By providing contextualized knowledge of the challenges faced by EAP students at Soran University and corroborating concerns that have been identified in prior research, the results of this study contribute to the advancement of the academic discourse on EAP education. This is essential as the core aim of this study was the promotion of academic writing skills for students at Science Department/Soran University. This analysis contributes significantly to our understanding of the universal challenges associated with EAP instruction by examining linguistic, instructional, and educational barriers and drawing parallels to prior research on the subject. It is crucial to acknowledge that the comprehensive analysis, in conjunction with the proposed actions and the prioritization of systemic enhancements, represents a significant contribution to the field.

5.1 Conclusion

The study sought to understand the complex obstacles that Bachelor of Science students experience when writing academic papers in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). The study used a phenomenological research methodology to

collect firsthand experiences, offering a full description of students' obstacles, aspirations, and the academic environment that influenced their academic writing skills.

The obtained results presented a comprehensive view of the challenges in academic writing, emphasizing the critical need for early curriculum integration of academic writing skills and targeted linguistic assistance. This underscored the pivotal role of institutional support, such as the establishment of writing centers and the provision of specialized writing courses. Addressing the incongruity between English as a second language instruction and the demands of scholarly writing for students from diverse fields of study, the study advocated for a more individualized and discipline-specific language education strategy.

Contributing significantly to the scholarly discourse on EAP education, the research offered a nuanced understanding of the obstacles faced by EAP students at Soran University. Through a meticulous examination of linguistic, institutional, and educational barriers, coupled with connections to prior research, the study provided a thorough analysis that deepened our comprehension of the universal difficulties inherent in EAP instruction. The proposed course of action and prioritized systemic improvements mark a substantial advancement in the discipline, emphasizing the potential implications of these approaches on educational policy and implementation in analogous circumstances.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusions of the current study examining the academic writing difficulties encountered by Bachelor of Science students at Soran University who utilized English for Academic Purposes (EAP), the following comprehensive recommendations can be proposed to address the identified challenges:

1. Enhance Linguistic Support: Implement targeted linguistic assistance programs that focus on the specific challenges identified, such as vocabulary development, grammar, punctuation, coherence, and tense usage. These programs should be integrated into the EAP curriculum and designed to meet the specific needs of non-native English speakers.
2. Integrate Academic Writing into Curricula: Make academic writing a core component of the curriculum across all disciplines from an early stage. This approach will ensure that students develop essential writing skills in a contextualized manner, enhancing their readiness for higher education challenges.
3. Improve Teaching Methods and Resources: Shift towards more interactive, communicative, and technology-integrated teaching methods. Encourage the use of technological advancements in the classroom to engage students and facilitate self-directed learning. Explore the use of online platforms, software, and applications that can support the development of writing skills.

4. Facilitate Peer Support and Collaboration: Encourage the formation of peer support groups and study circles where students can practice academic writing, share feedback, and learn from each other's experiences. Such collaborative learning environments can enhance motivation and facilitate the exchange of ideas and strategies.

5. Conduct Ongoing Research and Evaluation: Engage in continuous research to monitor the effectiveness of implemented strategies and identify emerging challenges. Regular assessments and feedback mechanisms should be established to tailor interventions to the students' evolving needs and to ensure that the academic writing support remains relevant and effective.

Implementing these recommendations requires a concerted effort from university administration, faculty, and students alike. Institutional commitment to improving EAP education, along with adequate resources and a willingness to innovate, will be crucial for enhancing the academic writing skills of non-English speakers of higher education.

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لێکۆڵینهوه له ئاستهنگهکانی نووسینی ئەکادیمی فێرخوازانێ بهکالۆریۆس له زانست له زانکۆی سۆران
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پوخته

ئهم توێژینه‌وهیه له ئاستهنگه‌کانی لێهاتوویی نووسینی ئەکادیمی له‌نیو فێرخوازانێ بهکالۆریۆس له فاکهلتی زانست و ئەندازیاری له زانکۆی سۆران ده‌کۆڵێته‌وه. تیشک ده‌خاته سه‌ر ئهو فێرخوازانیه‌ی که زمانی ئینگلیزی بۆ مه‌به‌ستی ئەکادیمی (EAP) به‌کار ده‌هێنن. به سه‌رنجدان له رۆلی سه‌ره‌کی زمانی ئینگلیزی له په‌یوه‌ندییه ئەکادیمییه جیهانییه‌کان و ئهو کیشه‌ تییینی‌کراوانیه‌ی که خوێندکارانی به‌شه نا-ئینگلیزییه‌کان له به‌شه‌کانی زانستدا روه‌بروویان ده‌بێته‌وه. ئامانج له‌م توێژینه‌وهیه بریتیه له ده‌ستنیشانکردنی هۆکاره زمانه‌وانیه‌ی و رینگاکانی فێرکردن و کولتوورییه تایبه‌ته‌کان، که تواناکانی نووسینی ئەکادیمی په‌که‌ده‌خه‌ن. به به‌کارهێنانی دیزاینیکی توێژینه‌وه‌ی دیاردنه‌ناسی، توێژینه‌وه‌که له ئەزموونی زیندووی فێرخوازان و وانه‌بێژان ده‌کۆڵێته‌وه بۆ تێگه‌شتن له ورده‌کاری گه‌روگره‌فته‌کانی توانسته‌کانی نووسینی ئەکادیمی پێشنیارکردنی چهند چاره‌سه‌ریک. له رینگه‌ی چاوپێکه‌وتنی نیمچه-رێکخراو و گفتوگۆی گرووپی دیاریکراو، توێژینه‌وه‌که نااماده‌کاری زمانه‌وانی پێکه‌داچووی ئالۆز، که‌موکو‌ری رینگاکانی فێرکردن وه کاریگه‌رییه کولتوورییه‌کان ئاشکرا ده‌کات، که به‌شدارن له کیشه‌کانی نووسینی خوێندکاران. ئەنجامه‌کان تیشک ده‌خه‌نه سه‌ر پێویستی تێکه‌له‌کردن و به‌سته‌وه‌ی پێشوه‌خته‌ی نووسینی ئەکادیمی له مه‌نه‌جه‌کاندا، هاوکاری زمانه‌وانیه‌ی که‌سی، پشتگیری دامه‌زراوه‌یه‌ی له رینگه‌ی ناوه‌نده‌کانی نووسین و خولی تایبه‌تمه‌نده‌وه. پێشنیازمه‌کان بریتین له به‌کارهێنانی (تبنی) شیواز (میتۆدۆلۆژیا)ی فێرکاری کارلیک‌کارانه‌تر و له روه‌ی ته‌که‌له‌لۆژیاوه باشت‌رکراو، وه پالێشتی زمانه‌وانی که‌سی که گرێداروبیت به‌ بواری په‌یونددار به‌ خوێندنی تایبه‌تمه‌ندی قوتابی. ئهم توێژینه‌وه‌یه به‌شداره له گوتاری په‌روه‌رده‌یی 'ئینگلیزی بۆ مه‌به‌ستی ئەکادیمی' به‌ پێشکه‌شکردنی تیروانین و رێنمایی پراکتیکی بۆ باشت‌رکردنی توانای نووسینی ئەکادیمی له‌ نیوان ئهو که‌سانه‌ی که زمانی ئینگلیزی زمانی ره‌سه‌نی گفتوگۆ و نووسینیان نییه و به‌کاریده‌هێنن له‌ خوێندنی بالادا.

وشه‌ی سه‌ره‌کی: نووسینی ئەکادیمی، به‌شی غه‌یره ئینگلیزی، فێرخوازانێ EFL (ئینگلیزی و مه‌ک زمانی بیانی)، ئاسته‌نگی زمانه‌وانیه‌ی.

دراسة تحديات الكتابة الأكاديمية لدى طلبة بكالوريوس العلوم في جامعة سوران من قبل

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الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على عوائق مؤهلات الكتابة الأكاديمية بين طلبة البكالوريوس في كلية العلوم والهندسة في جامعة سوران، و يسلط الضوء على الأشخاص الذين يستخدمون اللغة الإنكليزية للأغراض الأكاديمية (EAP) وبالنظر إلى الدور المحوري والرئيسي للغة الإنكليزية على العلاقات الأكاديمية العالمية، يراعي هذا البحث الصعوبات والإشكالات التي تواجه طلبة أقسام غير المختصين باللغة الإنكليزية والناطقين بغيرها، الذين يواجهونها في الأقسام العلمية. وتحدد هذه الدراسة غايات أسباب اللغويات أو اللسانيات وأهدافها، وتحدد أيضاً طرق التعليم والخصائص الثقافية، التي تعطل قوى الكتابة الأكاديمية باستخدام تصميم بحث توضيحي للتعرف على المظاهر الموجودة. وتبحث الدراسة عن تجارب حية للطلبة والمحاضرين للوصول إلى فهم دقائق مشاكل مؤهلات الكتابة الأكاديمية، وتقدم عدة تدخلات هادفة. وتظهر الدراسة عن طريق المقابلات شبه المنظمة، و مناقشات مجموعة محددة، و البحوث غير المعدة من ناحية اللغوية التأثيرات الثقافية التي تساهم مع مشاكل وصعوبات الكتابة لدى الطلبة. وأهداف هذه الدراسة تسلط الضوء على دمج و توطيد الكتابة الأكاديمية للمناهج، تعاون اللغويات الشخصية، تأييد المؤسسية عن طريق مراكز الكتابة والدورات الخاصة. والتوصيات تتضمن استخدام وتبني الطرق (ميتولوجيا) التعليمية التي تتفاعل و هي أفضل من ناحية التكنولوجيا، ويساند اللسانيات الشخصية التي تتعلق بمجال الكتابة الخاصة بالطلبة. و تساهم هذه الدراسة في خطاب تربوي (إنكليزية لغرض الأكاديمي) بتقديم النظريات والتوجيهات العملية وإرشاداتها الهادفة لأجل تحسين و تطوير قوى الكتابة الأكاديمية وكفائتها، عند من لم يكن اللغة الإنكليزية هي لغة الأم لديه في المحاورات و الكتابات، ومع ذلك أنه يحتاج إليها في التعليم العالي.

الكلمات الافتتاحية: الكتابة الأكاديمية، الأقسام غير الإنكليزية، طلبة (FEL) (الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية)،
العقبات اللغوية